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Shoreline

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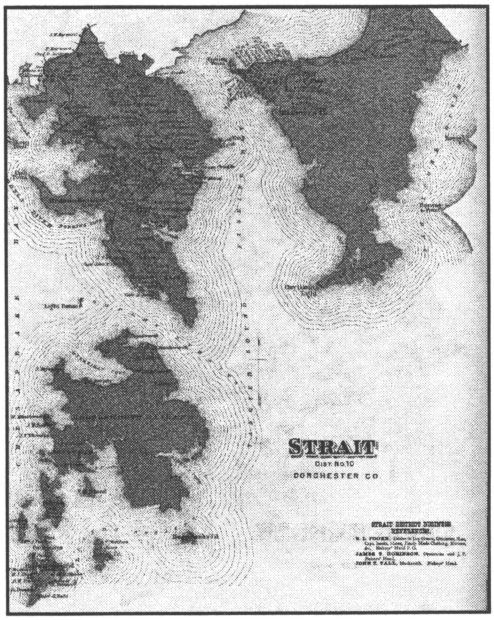
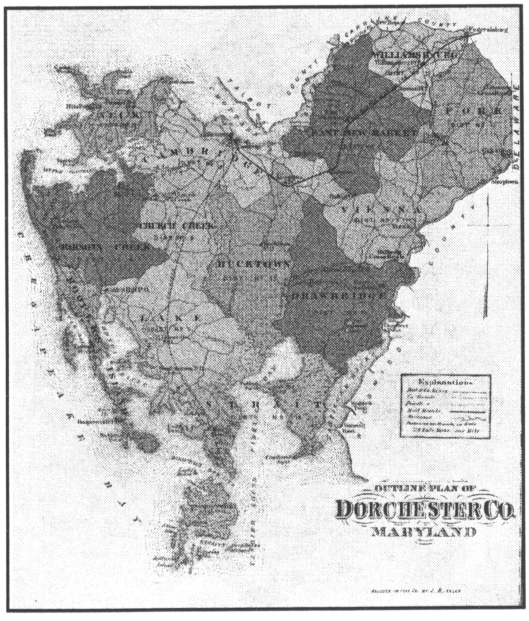
A Look at the 1877 Atlas

By Jessica Howell

Among the numerous books, diaries, letters and personal collections that the Edward H. Nabb Research Center boasts, the map collection remains one of the Nabb Center's largest "undiscovered" treasures. Although I have worked at the Nabb Center for several months now, I was completely oblivious to the fact the Nabb Center possessed such an extensive map collection. As I began looking through the map collection, I came to realize just how intricate, detailed and extensive each map was. As my appreciation for the map collection grew, so did my interest. That's when I came across *The 1877 Atlases and Other Early Maps of the Eastern Shore of Maryland*. Now here was a collection of maps I could relate to!



Bound in a dark brown cover, faded with time, is a collection of atlases and maps of the Eastern Shore. As a native of the Eastern Shore, I recognized most of the county maps included in the atlas, such as Dorchester County (where my home town is located), Caroline, Talbot, Queen Anne's, Kent, Worcester, Wicomico and Somerset. In the atlas each county is laid out, divided by voting district and displayed in varying shades of green, yellow and bright pink. The "Outline Plan of Dorchester Co. Maryland," to use an example, includes district and county lines, county roads, private roads, rail road tracks, and streams, all clearly labeled for the reader. Accompanying most of the maps are business references for school teachers, blacksmiths, doctors, apothecaries, shoe makers, painters, cabinet makers, attorneys, real estate agents, merchants, publishers and so much more. Long before the Wal-Mart conglomerates and grocery stores, when doctors still made house calls, each farmer or storeowner had his/her own "specialty." For example, in East New Market, M.H. Rose, proprietor of "Rose Hill Vineyards," had a "full assortment of Grape Roots, Strawberries, Blackberries, Raspberries. Currants and China potatoes on hand."



Before Little Debbie snack cakes, E.D. Barnett of Cambridge specialized in baking "cakes, bread" and "pies," and manufacturing "Candy…Toys, Soaps, Perfumeries and Notions." These maps do not just outline the different counties that make up the Eastern Shore, they also exemplify the quaintness and charm for which the Shore is famous.

Yet another interesting aspect of these maps is that the individual residences of each region are labeled. Knowing that my mother's side-of-the-family are all long time natives of the Eastern Shore, I began searching to see if my ancestors were listed on one of the maps. My great grandmothers' maiden name was Todd, and I was able to locate my ancestors on one of the maps. Listed on a map of, "Strait, Dist. No. 10, Dorchester Co.," was a cluster of Todds, Merediths and Robinsons. Although I had never met any of these people, or even seen a picture of them, it was exciting to find them listed on the pages of this book. I was even able to copy the page and add it to our family records.

Despite all the wonderful things that the Nabb Center's map collection has to offer, it still remains an enormous untapped resource. Many people are not aware of the vast possibilities and information that maps have to offer (I myself was unaware). Whether you are researching voting districts, early exploration or even looking for past generations of your own family, the Edward H. Nabb Research Center map collection has something for everyone. So next time you are researching that term paper, working on a group project or have nothing to do on a rainy day, come enjoy the endless possibilities that the Nabb Center's map collection has to offer.

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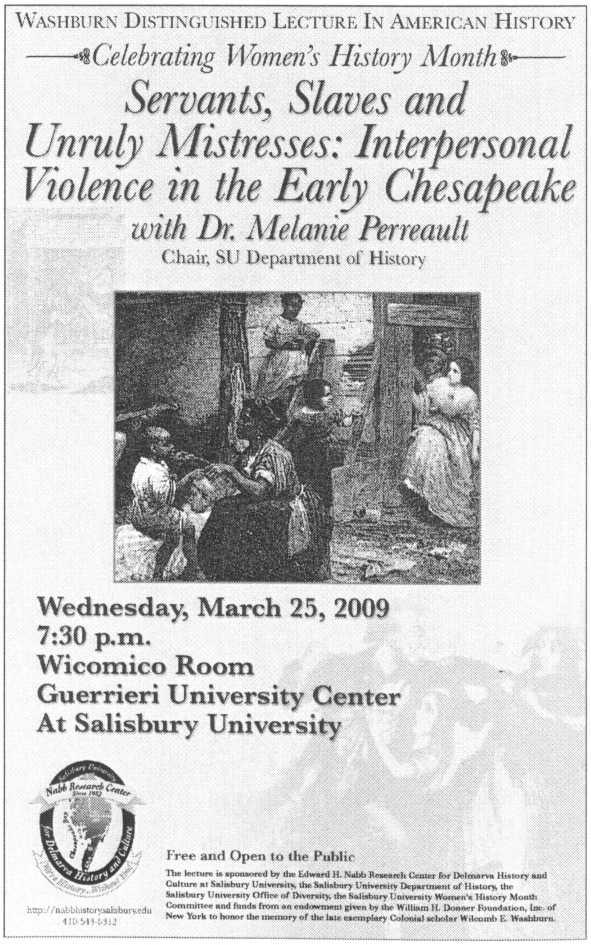
Upcoming Events:

Servants, Slaves and Unruly Mistresses:
Interpersonal Violence in the Early Chesapeake
Wednesday, March 25
Wicomico Room, Guerrieri University Center, 7:30 p.m.
Celebrating Woman's History Month, Dr. Melanie Perreault, chair of the SU History Department, presents the 2009 Wilcomb Washburn Distinguished Lecture in American History. Perreault examines how acts of violence both challenged and reinforced community standards in 17th century Chesapeake.

Family History Workshop Part II
Saturday, March 7
Burton Reading Room, Nabb Research Center, 9 a.m-Noon
Director of the Edward H. Nabb Research Center, Dr. G. Ray Thompson, introduces family researchers to approximately 60 different types of records and how they can be used to uncover more information about individual family histories. The workshop is $30 and reservations can be made by calling the Nabb Center at 410-543-6312.

Celebrating Archaeology Month
Saturday, April 18
Burton Reading Room, Nabb Research Center, 2 p.m.
Dr. Elizabeth Ragan, SU associate professor of history, lectures on "Over the Sea to Somerset: 17th Century Trade in a Neglected Corner of the Chesapeake."

Fundraiser at Ross Mansion in Seaford
Saturday, May 2
The fully restored mansion in Seaford, DE, of Governor William Henry Harrison Ross—a highly popular Governor from 1851-1855—is the site for the Nabb Research Center's annual fundraising event. Guests visit a simpler bygone time period and explore an Italianate mansion with slave quarters, barns, sheds and spacious grounds. Tickets will be available in early spring.


Washburn Distinguished Lecture In American History
Celebrating Women's History Month
Servants, Slaves and Unruly Mistresses: Interpersonal Violence in the Early Chesapeake
with Dr. Melanie Perreault
Chair, SU Department of History
Wednesday, March 25, 2009
7:30 p.m.
Wicomico Room
Guerrieri University Center
At Salisbury University
Free and Open to the Public
The lecture is sponsored by the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at Salisbury University, the Salisbury University Department of History, the Salisbury University Office of Diversity, the Salisbury University Women's History Month Committee and funds from an endowment given by the William H. Donner Foundation, Inc. of New York to honor the memory of the late exemplary Colonial scholar Wilcomb E. Washburn.
http://nabbhistorysalisbury.edu
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